

ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME



ITP: **Locally controlled forest restoration – A governance and market-oriented approach for resilient landscapes**

Call for applications for fifth programme round
in English language January - December 2026

Closing date
for applications:
› August 31 2025



Welcome

In the last decade, Forest and Landscape Restoration (FLR) has been adopted for global, regional and national commitments for multiple goals such as climate mitigation, water security, biodiversity and forest resources to support rural livelihoods. Despite extensive international support for climate and development cooperation, practical results and continuity have been limited after project-based support ends. Incentives for local actors is one major driver often missing. The failure of FLR to reduce poverty by creating local value maintains the status quo of land use dependency, forest degradation and loss while also failing to create the desired benefits for biodiversity, water management and carbon mitigation.

This International Training Programme (ITP) uses a systemic approach to build capacity broadly in all actors with a stake in FLR. As the programme title indicates, the emphasis is on driving scalable FLR outside of support programmes. The programme objective is to build capacity in organisations to establish governance, tenure and business support that encourages local smallholders, communities and entrepreneurs to become agents of change based on competitive, transparent and scalable value chains, leaving no one behind.

The ITP is based on current evidence of the economic, social and ecological aspects of FLR and on sharing experiences between a multitude of actors and country contexts during the training. Swedish forest history is used as a background and inspiration. Sweden managed to restore unsustainably exploited forests through broad societal investment to sustain forest production and increase industrial value. Swedish smallholder organisations, governance and policies, make an interesting backdrop, as it balances different goals for forest legislation and the work on improving the protection of water and biodiversity to meet forest certification standards as well as EU-legislation. This is set against the global challenges of meeting future demands for biobased forest products as well as biodiversity, water management, carbon storage and fossil materials substitution.

The Swedish Forest Agency is proud to provide this International Training Programme on Locally Controlled Forest Restoration on behalf of Sida. However, this call for applications is subject to the extension of the program by Sida, whose decision is expected in August.



Herman Sundqvist
DIRECTOR GENERAL
Swedish Forest Agency

Programme objectives

The long-term desired outcome of LoCoFoRest is a flourishing and inclusive forest sector with capacity to restore degraded forest landscapes based on new market opportunities, a growing bio-economy, and long-term social and ecological sustainability. The LoCoFoRest's overall objective to contribute to this change is to accumulate competences how to enable scalable local business as a driver for FLR and, therefore, improved livelihoods as well as ecosystem services. Using a systemic approach, the programme aims to attract participants from across the FLR sector (government, civil society, private sector, research and education). The participants will broaden their understanding of:

- FLR challenges, opportunities and prerequisites for multiple desired goals.
- Water and other ecosystem services in developing landscapes.
- Social and governance aspects of LoCoFoRest.

DIRECT BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- › **Broadened understanding, experiences and exchange of knowledge**
- › **Developing and connecting to national, regional and international FLR networks**
- › **Improved capacity to contribute to LoCoFoRest in their own organisations**

- How forest product value-chains can drive sustainable rural/urban development and FLR.
- Preparing proposals for organisational change to promote LoCoFoRest.

Contents

This training programme covers forest landscape restoration (FLR) which integrates the economic, social and ecological aspects broadly. It has a special focus on governance which support local participation and ownership in FLR, ecosystem services from the forests such as water, and scalability of FLR through entrepreneurship and sustainable value chains from forest products. The program starts with a regional/national start-meeting followed by an online preparatory course, aimed at giving all participants an understanding of the key aspects of the programme.

In the middle of the programme there will be a ten-day workshop in Sweden or in your region to exemplify, analyze and discuss ecological, governance and industrial aspects of FLR using participants' experience as well as the historical and current development in Sweden as a backdrop. During this workshop coaches will support participants to in developing the "Change Project" (CP) plan that is to be implemented during the second half of the programme.

As a last component, the result of the CP will be presented in a meeting which will also be the start-up meeting for participants in the next programme round. National/regional key FLR stakeholders will be invited to participate in this start/end-meeting.

The Change Project

Each participant will initiate a Change Project (CP) to be carried out in their own organization. It will be a part time assignment during about four months after the mid-term workshop. Applicants are requested to include a CP idea, relevant to the nominating organization, in their application. The idea will later be discussed with coaches and other participants during the mid-term workshop. Collaborative projects are recommended where pairs or groups of participants from different organizations join in a common CP.

The CP should develop and support a process to strengthen enabling conditions for sustainable and scalable LoCoFoRest aspects of FLR. Depending on the mandate of the participant's organizations, this can be improved governance, support for

ecosystem services or for local entrepreneurship, business and sustainable value chains or a mix of all these.

The objective of the CP is not to implement a full FLR project – but to find ways for more efficient governance and actor involvement for locally controlled FLR (LoCoFoRest). The CP method includes research and stakeholder dialogues to agree on challenges and opportunities for more sustainable and scalable FLR. In successive course rounds CPs may build on previous ones and even approach implementation for previously broadly agreeable CP proposals. See www.locoforest.se for examples.

Please note that **no funding is available from Sida or the project partners for the Change Project implementation** other than the training supervision.

Programme structure

PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

The programme consists of four compulsory components and takes close to one year to complete. All components are based in the participant's home country/office, apart from the mid-term workshop in Sweden or may be regional in neighboring countries. The participation is expected to take around 20% of full-time throughout the year. See more details about the programme components, including examples of change projects at www.locoforest.se.

COMPONENT 1 – START-UP MEETING AND ONLINE COURSE

After a regional or national start-up meeting, the training programme starts with four months online self-guided studies mixed with regular virtual short workshops. The start-up meeting mainly is an occasion to meet other participants and the program-team and effort will be given to the suggested Change Projects and if joint CPs between participants can be achieved. The objective of the subsequent online course is to ensure all participants to have an understanding about the key aspects of FLR. There are five modules in the course. The first one looks at the LoCoFoRest programme objectives, in relation to the UN Agenda 2030 and to current FLR commitments diversity and success or failure. Subsequent modules cover economic, social and ecological aspects of FLR and the links between them. A final module concerns the Change Project method. Most modules contain three to four activities, each activity designed to take less than one full working day (eight hours). However, the time needed for each activity can vary depending on the participant's level of knowledge of the specific subject.

COMPONENT 2 – INTENSIVE MID-TERM WORKSHOP

The intensive mid-term workshop is in the heart of the of the training programme. The objective is to discuss how LoCoFoRest can be developed in your country/region, and how participants can make use of the LoCoFoRest CP method. Major components of the week will be field visits and interactive activities with coaches and fellow participants to finalize participants CP plans. Also, the Swedish forest sector narrative; the drivers for historic restoration of degraded forests and the development of policies and governance systems to balance the economic, social, and ecological values, will be covered shortly as a backdrop for the workshop. Presentations by experts are mixed with interactive exercises and discussions, as well as field excursions and visits to different actors in the forest sector.

COMPONENT 3 – COACHED CHANGE PROJECT

The applicants are required to suggest a change project in their ITP application, which should be approved by the applicant's organization(s). Applicants from different organizations can – and are encouraged to – suggest a joint project. Support to develop CP objectives and project-plans will be given in the start-up meeting and the mid-term workshop between participants, coaches and the programme team. After the workshop, during about four to six months, coaches will be in virtual contact to support and follow up implementation of the plan and to address emerging questions and challenges. The ITP may also provide a local contact in each country for general support as well as specific subject expertise if needed.

COMPONENT 4 – REGIONAL/NATIONAL FINAL MEETING FOR CP REPORTING

The finalized CP will be presented at a final regional/national meeting, which in most cases coincide with the start-up meeting of the consecutive course-round.

COMPONENT 5 – ALUMNI PLATFORM AND ALUMNI SEMINARS

Once the training program is complete, participants join the LoCoFoRest alumni network and continue to benefit from access to the online course.

Admission requirements

INVITED COUNTRIES

Ethiopia, Laos, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam.

TARGET GROUP

Only candidates nominated by an appropriate organisation to make individual applications in accordance with national rules will be considered. We are looking for a mix of participants: men, woman, government, civil society, private sector, academia, teachers etc, from a variety of sectors/interest groups. In general, the programme only accepts nationals in FLR-relevant positions, employed (or engaged) with an organisation (non-UN) based in their country. Applicants should have a minimum of three to five years professional experience, but still have at least a decade or two to give in professional activity. Ideally you have an academic qualification, however we can also consider people without a university degree but with relevant experience.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates from countries where English is not an official language should have their English proficiency certified in the application, unless other documentation like a certified language test is available. The certification should be signed by someone in an official position at the nomination organisation.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Participants should be in good health and have full working capacity to undertake international travel and work away from home, including forest field visits. Therefore, candidates are recommended to have a medical examination before filling in the Medical Statement on the Application form.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

The 25 participants will represent a broad set of the five countries. An interesting and well-motivated idea for a Change Project is beneficial for your application. A suggestion for joint CP to bringing together candidates from different organizations is likely to be prioritized.

It is mandatory for each applicant to go through and be informed by the short online “LoCoFoRest orientation” at www.locoforest.se for hers or his application to be valid (to be confirmed by ticking a box in the application form).

Participants will need a laptop, good internet access, an email address and basic computer skills. Family members are not allowed to accompany participants in any travel for meetings and workshops outside the home country.

COSTS

There are no fees or other payments that must be taken by the applicant, participants, or organizations to apply or participate – report any such false claims to us.

Costs for lectures, documentation, coaching, study tours and some social activities are covered by the organizer. Accommodation and food during workshops are also covered, as well as insurance and international travel in economy class if needed. Airline reservations will in such cases be made by the Swedish Forest Agency and issued by a Swedish travel agency.

Participants and their organizations must cover costs for personal expenses, domestic travel in home country, visa fees, local airport taxes and departure fees, as well as participants’ salaries during training and any local cost for executing the change project.

VISA

Participants are responsible for obtaining all visas needed for travel if needed.

CERTIFICATE

Participants who successfully complete all training components will be awarded a certificate of completion of LoCoFoRest training.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Closing date for applications for the second course round is August 31, 2025. Please note that the call for applications may be withdrawn if Asdi decides not to continue with the program in 2026-2027.

Applications should be made using the designated form available at www.locoforest.se.

The form should be filled in electronically, printed and signed, scanned, and sent as an attachment in an e-mail to locoforest.apply@skogsstyrelsen.se.

Closing date for applications:
> August 31, 2025

Individual applicants must be nominated by their organization or institution by signature on the application form. The application should be submitted directly to the programme secretariat on the above e-mail. Successful applicants will be notified no later than September 22, 2025 and are expected to confirm participation not later than September 30, 2025. Detailed instructions for the course will follow promptly, and a start-up meeting is planned for in January 2026.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) offers, as part of its bilateral development assistance, capacity development activities in areas of strategic importance to the social, environmental and economic development in the participating countries. The purpose of the Advanced International Training Programmes is to provide resources and develop knowledge, skills and expertise to organisations with strong legitimacy in relation to target groups, democracy practices etc. in areas given priority in Swedish development cooperation, are based on identified priorities and needs and in which Swedish expertise is in demand.

ORGANISERS



Swedish Forest Agency

www.skogsstyrelsen.se/en/

The Swedish Forest Agency is the national expert authority for forest-related issues. The agency's main function is implementing the Swedish forest policy, safeguarding social, economic and ecological forest values. The Agency is the lead organizer of the programme in cooperation with the partners below.



Eco-Innovation Foundation

www.eco-innovation.org

The Eco-Innovation Foundation is a non-profit foundation supporting the development of transparent, sustainable and competitive industrial systems as a lever to turn the negative trend of forest destruction into the opposite – rehabilitation and restoration. EIF is founded by a group of foresters and business consultants whose previous work includes green strategy and business development for corporations, cities, government agencies, leading NGO's and SME's in more than 40 countries.



Stockholm International Water Institute

www.siwi.org

SIWI is an international water institute aiming to leverage knowledge and its convening power to strengthen water governance for a just, prosperous and sustainable future. The interlinkages between forests, landscape management and water resources is one area where SIWI engages in multi stakeholder-dialogues and development projects.